

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-05 CIAE-00 COME-00
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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7394
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

UNCLAS LONDON 13784

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, UK

SUBJECT: LAKER PROPOSES CHANGES IN SKYTRAIN SERVICE

1. LAKER AIRWAYS HAS PROPOSED TO THE UK CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (CAA) VARIOUS CHANGES IN HIS SKYTRAIN SERVICE WHICH WOULD MAKE IT MORE EQUIVALENT TO THE NEW LOW FARE NORTH ATLANTIC SERVICE PROPOSED BY THE IATA AIRLINES. LAKER HAS REQUESTED THAT IT BE ALLOWED TO OPERATE SKYTRAIN FROM GATWICK INSTEAD OF STANSTED, INCREASE THE FREE BAGGAGE ALLOWANCE TO 44 LBS., ALLOCATE SEATS FROM 0400 HOURS ON THE DAY OF DEPARTURE AND USE TRAVEL AGENTS. THE CAA IS REPORTED IN LLOYD'S LIST TO HAVE SAID THAT LAKER COULD NOT EXPECT A DECISION ON ITS APPLICATION BY SEPT. 26, THE DATE SCHEDULED FOR SKYTRAIN TO BEGIN.

2. LAKER INSISTS THAT A SHIFT TO GATWICK SHOULD NOT PRESENT DIFFICULTIES. IT USES GATWICK AS ITS HOME BASE AND WAS ORIGINALLY FORCED INTO A STANSTED OPERATION BECAUSE OF THE EARLIER LICENSING OF BRITISH CALEDONIAN TO FLY THE NORTH ATLANTIC FROM GATWICK, WHICH IS NO LONGER PLANNED. MOREOVER, LAKER WOULD BRING A NORTH ATLANTIC SERVICE THROUGH GATWICK AT A TIME WHEN CAA HAS UNCLASSIFIED

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BEEN UNABLE TO PERSUADE MAJOR INTERNATIONAL NORTH ATLANTIC CARRIERS TO MOVE ANY OF THEIR SERVICES TO GATWICK.

3. FREDDIE LAKER HIMSELF ATTACKED THE IATA STANDBY PROPOSAL ON GROUNDS THAT CAB AND THE UK DEPT. OF TRADE AND CAA MAY HAVE TO CONSIDER. HE CLAIMED THAT THE

PROPOSAL WAS "A SERIOUS BREACH OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A PUBLIC CARRIER." HE ELABORATED, "IT APPEARS THAT FULL FARE 'ON DEMAND' PASSENGERS COULD BE DENIED A SEAT FROM 0400 ON THE DAY OF TRAVEL, SINCE ALL AVAILABLE EMPTY SEATS WILL HAVE BEEN ALLOCATED TO STANDBY PASSENGERS TRAVELING AT A FRACTION OF THE FULL IATA FARE. THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF A 'SCHEDULED' AIR SERVICE WILL BE UNDERMINED."

4. EMBASSY HAS HEARD THAT NEW YORK PORT AUTHORITY HAS OBJECTIONS TO LAKER'S SKYTRAIN SERVICE LANDING AT KENNEDY AND THAT THE OBJECTIONS COULD SOMEHOW ALSO APPLY TO PANAM, TWA AND BRITISH AIRWAYS OPERATING THE STANDBY IATA FARE SYSTEM AT KENNEDY. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE INFORMATION ON ANY DIFFICULTIES SKYTRAIN WILL HAVE IN GETTING UNDERWAY FROM US END.

STREATOR

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